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## TANDEM TALKS.

DROCH.

SCENE: *The curb-stone near the village inn at Locust Valley, under a spreading tree.*



YOU are all wrong about the modern woman's taste in reading," said Diana, as she pushed a bottle of pop against the hitching-post and spattered it over her blue shirt-waist.

"I haven't said anything. I'm humble, but I hate to see good stuff wasted when I'm thirsty," meekly answered Adrian.

"Yes, you have," chirped Diana. "You've said that women like ginger-pop literature, while only Scotch-and-seltzer literature is good enough for men. I've been investigating your real ideas. You have lots of friends who like to give you away."

"That Reddington girl talks too much," growled Adrian.

"You seemed to find her talk very entertaining on the boat the other day," jibed Diana, with a glitter in her eye.

"She never reads a book. I only talk horse and golf with her," said Adrian.

"Wrong again! You always underestimate us," said Diana. "She is one of the lights of our Civitas Club, and is an authority on the relation of garbage disposal to primary education."

"Whew! What do you go in for when ginger-pop literature palls?" asked Adrian.

"I am chairman of the committee on jurisprudence," said Diana, tossing her pretty head. She knew that the sun was dappling it, as the rays sifted through the leaves. "Moreover, I don't read ginger-pop literature at all. This has been a busy week, with most of my time spent out of doors. The less time that I have for reading, the better the books I choose. All my recent spare time, for instance, has been devoted to Lecky's 'Democracy and Liberty.' I have been comparing it with De Tocqueville, Sir Henry Maine and James Bryce."

"That beats me," said Adrian. "Stevenson's 'Weir of Hermiston' is good enough for me."

"Tell me about 'Weir,' and then I can talk intelligently about it without reading it," said the complacent Diana.

"It is the most satisfactory fragment that I ever read,"



"I don't read ginger-pop literature."

## THE BOOK SPEAKS.

said Adrian, "because it is not incomplete in the sense that a sketch is incomplete. It is like one of the fragments of the Parthenon frieze—finished absolutely as far as it goes, and carrying with it a full implication of the whole great work of art. Each character stands alone, and a man of imagination can follow easily the action of the suggested plot."

"But that is a very different thing from following it with Stevenson to play the words for martial music," said Diana.

"And what a musician he was!" exclaimed Adrian. "He never touched so many keys in a single work as in this fragment of 'Weir.' The man who feared to put women in his books until *Catriona*, has created two in these few pages who are different from any others, and altogether fascinating. The elder *Kirstie* is without a prototype in fiction. The episode of the four Black Brothers would make the fortune of a short-story writer."

"But it is all awfully Scotch?" asked Diana, with a grimace.

"Yes, and no one can ever hope to excel it as Scotch. The whole business of writing macaronic English ought to stop right here with 'Weir.' They have shown what can be done with a dying dialect, and let it stand at that. It is time for writers who hope to be great to show what can be accomplished with pure English. We have had revivals of all ages, epochs, and dialects of the English tongue—but there is never a man of them all who has tried to write a story in simply the best modern English of educated people. That would be a novelty in fiction worth trying."

"I believe you," said Diana, as she fastened her coat to the handle-bar and vaulted into the saddle.

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## THE BOOK SPEAKS.

(TO EUGENE FIELD.)

*An  
Inscription  
Written at  
Field's  
Request.*

I'm keeping jolly company  
In a room that's full of books;  
I'm cheek by jowl with Horace  
And a lot of ancient crooks.  
But the boys I like to play with,  
When the boss takes off his coat,  
Are the wild and woolly heroes  
From Casey's tabble dote.  
And when the lamp is lighted  
And cozy hours ensue,  
I talk with All-Aloney  
And the little Boy in Blue.  
But when the man that owns the books  
Throws one kind glance at *me*  
I sing just like the Dinkey  
In the Amfelula Tree.

DROCH.